

BICYCLE MOBILE HAMS OF AMERICA



Apr/May/Jun 2001

May 18-20

Mike Nickolaus, NFØN, Forum Moderator
email: nf0n@arrl.net

The Dayton Hamvention website is located at:
<http://www.hamvention.org/>. -Ed.

Once again, we have been allotted one hour of official forum time. Since we are the first forum of the day, we will have an informal session prior to our official time. We will meet in Room 2 at 8:00 a.m. for the informal time.

Here are the details:

Date: Sunday, May 20, 2001

Time: Informal, 8:00 am – 8:30 am

Forum: 8:30 am – 9:30 am

Location: Room 2 (This is the same location as 1999)

Here's the lineup:

Moderator: Mike Nickolaus, NFON

8:00 – 8:30 Informal get together.

8:30 – 8:15 Welcome, Announcements, Introductions

8:15 - 8:45 "HF Bicycle Mobile,...DX???"

200 Ned Mountain, WC4X

8:45 – 9:15 "Dayton or Bust: Bicycle Mobile from Ontario to Ohio"

--- John Cumming, VE3JC

--- Ken LaRose, VE3ELA

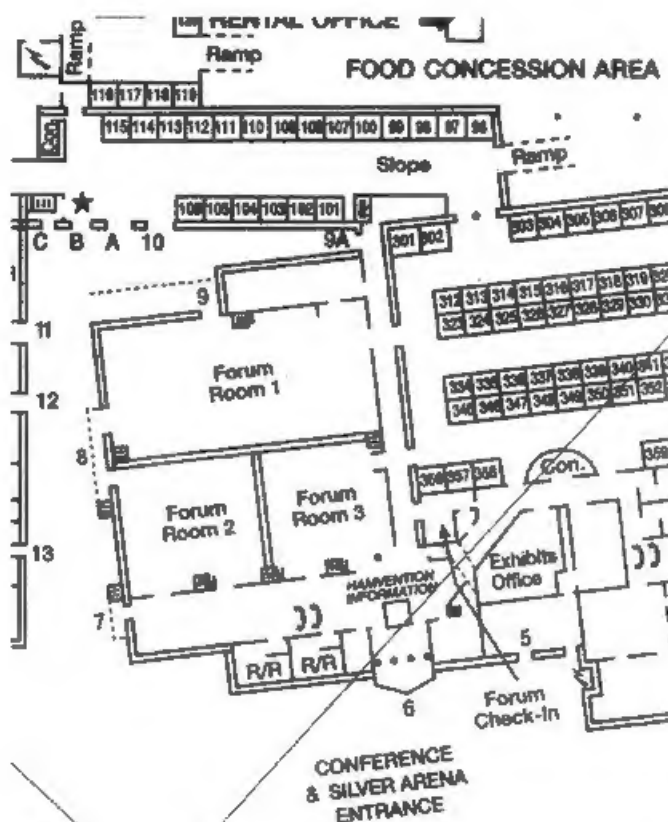
--- Russ Dwarshuis, KB8U

9:15 – 9:30 Share your ideas with other BMHA'ers

--- Mike Nickolaus, NFØN

We will be looking for you at 8:00 am on Sunday May 20. Bring your ideas with you and if you have handouts, we will have a place for you to make them available to others.

After the forum, we can continue our "Visiting" at the Food Concession area which is close to our forum room (see diagram this page).



Bicycle Mobile Hams of America Annual Dayton Hamvention Ride (See BMHA NEWS, Page 2)

BMHA NEWS

Bicycle Mobile Hams of America Annual Dayton Hamvention Ride

Saturday May 19, 2001, Tipp City, Ohio

Come and meet your fellow BMHA members and check out their bicycle-mounted rigs. Set up a special-event station. You can bring your bike and come on the ride, or relax in the park and perhaps have a QSO with those of us on the ride. Also, in response to requests from BMHAers who have some logistical problems getting their bikes to the Dayton area

RENTAL BIKES WILL BE AVAILABLE !!

Our friends at Tipp Cyclery (whom you may remember as the donor of the "I Traveled the Farthest to the BMHA Ride" T-shirt) have informed us that a limited number of rental bikes will be available. Check out their web site at www.tippcyclery.com, or send me an email and I'll put you in touch with them. My email address is otown@infnet.com

General Information

Once again the ride will start from the Municipal Park in Tipp City, Ohio. Tipp City is on Interstate 75, about 10 miles northeast of the Hamvention site at Hara Arena (see map below).



The ride will leave at 3:30 PM EDT. If you'd like to come up early for a snack or some socializing, we'll be there by about 2:00 PM. We will be meeting in the north parking lot (see the map on my website for details). Don't worry about finding us, it's not as if you could hide a bunch of biker-hams in a park that size.

For the latest details, the map and some interesting pictures of previous years ride, see my website at: <http://my.ohio.voyager.net/~otown/bmha.htm>

Back Issues Still Available.

You may purchase any of the 40 back issues of the BMHA Newsletter for \$1.50 each, postpaid. For info on the contents of the various issues send a business-size SASE to: BMHA, 316 East 32nd Street, South Sioux City, NE 68776-3512, and ask for the Index of Back Issues. This service available to members only.

BMHA NEWSLETTER

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BMHA NEWSLETTER is a quarterly publication of the Bicycle Mobile Hams of America - Jan, Apr, July, and Oct. Permission is given to reproduce any of the material in this issue, provided the author is credited and the source is acknowledged as "from the Newsletter of the Bicycle Mobile Hams of America." Please send a clip to the address below. We welcome articles, suggestions, letters, announcements, photos, artwork - anything pertaining to the combining of bicycling with amateur radio.

The BMHA is affiliated with Adventure Cycling Association, the League of American Bicyclists, and Worldradio.

BICYCLE MOBILE HAMS OF AMERICA (BMHA)

c/o Mike Nickolaus, NF0N

316 E. 32nd St.

South Sioux City, NE 68776-3512

E-mail: BMHA-Webmaster@LaFetra.com

Website: <http://www.LaFetra.com/BMHA/>

ABOUT BMHA

For the information of our first-time readers

Bicycle Mobile Hams of America got its start when a 'Stray' in the June '89 QST magazine asked to "get in touch with hams who operate their radios while bicycle-mobile," signed by Hartley Alley, NA0A. Twenty-five hams responded, filled out questionnaires, and received a summary of the collected data.

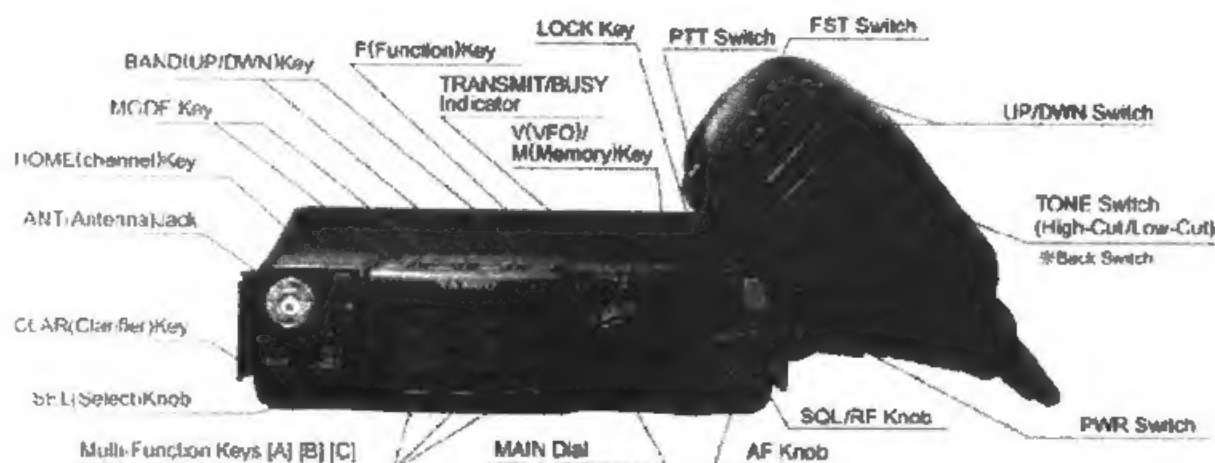
In April of '90 we had our first BMHA Forum at the Dayton Hamvention. We played to a packed house, overflowed the room, and added 54 names to our mailing list. Our eight subsequent forums have drawn increasingly larger audiences, and now BMHA is firmly established as a 'regular' at this world-renowned event.

This is the forty-first issue of our quarterly newsletter, which has become the clearinghouse for the exchange of info and ideas for the hams who go on the air from their bicycles.

BMHA membership puts you in touch with a friendly and helpful group of bike-riding hams. You'll make contacts through our membership directory, E-mail address list, E-mail discussion group, the annual meeting and Forum at the Dayton Hamvention and other regional meetings, and of course through the BMHA Newsletter, which has articles on bike trips, antennas, other gear, operating tips, etc. A membership application is on the next-to-last page.

Review: Yaesu FT-817

by Bil Paul, KD6JUI



I had been looking for the ideal transceiver for bicycle use for a long time. So far, the ones I'd used had limitations. They were too big, or used too much juice, or didn't operate on enough frequencies, or were for Morse code only, or ...

Also, up to this point I'd used only handy-talkies while in motion, for two-meter (144 MHz) repeater use. For campground operation, I'd used larger rigs for HF (1 MHz through 30 MHz) use.

When rumors began to fly last year about a QRP (low power) rig from big-time Japanese manufacturer Yaesu, a lot of us low-power enthusiasts couldn't wait to see its specifications and to actually handle it. The details began trickling in: it was dubbed the FT-817, would sell in the \$700 range, and had more bells and whistles than you could shake a stick at. I got to look at one at a ham convention -- I was hooked!

By the way, if you receive QST, the national ham magazine, the rig was reviewed in the April issue.

Now for some specs: The 81's receiver covers a lot of territory -- from below the AM broadcast band continuously up to 30 MHz, then the 6-meter ham radio band (50-54 MHz), the FM broadcast band, 108 through 154 MHz (includes the 2 meter ham band), and finally 430-450 MHz (includes the 440 MHz ham band).

On transmit, it covers the 160 through 6 meter ham bands, the 2-meter band, and the 440 MHz ham band.

Transmission modes include CW (Morse code), SSB (single side band -- voice), FM, AM and data.

It's the size of a pack of greeting cards: 7-1/2 x 5-1/2 x 1-1/2 inches and weighs around 2-1/2 pounds with internal battery pack. That's right -- it's that small, and it still holds 8 AA cells or a rechargeable Ni-Cad battery pack from the company. About the only thing it lacks is an antenna tuner.

The 817 comes with a microphone, and a rubber-duck type antenna usable on 144 and 440 MHz. Power output is in steps up to 5 watts. It can operate off power supplies

providing between 8 and 16 volts. The only downside I've seen is that it consumes more current than I like -- not a serious problem, but the company probably could've done better in that department (*consumption is 2A at full-power transmit, 450mA on receive, and 250mA squelched. Ed*). Of course, when you have a computer and a backlit LCD display screen (you can turn the backlight off), you're going to have higher current requirements than very simple rigs.

I love it because now I only need to carry one transceiver on bike tours for HF, VHF and UHF.

The other part of its attraction is its computerization, as in "bells and whistles." There are many more options and variables than I'll ever need, but it's nice to have them as an option. Using combinations of small buttons and dials on the front panel, you can do such things as select power output, microphone gain, select between front or rear antenna connectors, display power output/SWR/modulation level, etc. It goes on and on. Essentially the rig is close kin to much larger and more expensive Yaesu transceivers.

So far I've used the 817 in the shack on HF with very good luck, getting into Europe, the Far East and South America on 5 watts (mostly on 10 meters, or 28 MHz, which is a hot band now). On the bicycle I've been using it for 2-meter repeater use. I bought an MFJ boom/headset condenser microphone to use with it, which fits inside my helmet. The rig seems very rugged -- it survived my first bike accident in 25 years (I rear-ended a pickup truck which stopped suddenly).

The next step on longer rides will be to attempt operating on the HF ham bands using a hamstick on the back of the bike. It will also be my only rig on my annual week-long tour in late July, in Oregon.

Is it worth \$750+? That's a bunch of change, to be sure. You really have to be into QRP operation and smallness to want one that bad. As it was, I went on eBay and sold some of my previous equipment, and that paid for half of it. The other half will be my birthday, Christmas, and Father's Day presents -- you know the drill!

EDITOR'S NOTEPAD

Another Quarter Already???

People say, "Time flies when you're having fun!" I wish that were the case for me. I've been busy, busy, busy! My poor bicycles have been collecting dust for nearly two years. ☹ But there's good news in the future: My daughter, Diana, is old enough to wear a helmet! ☺ Therefore, I'm going to buy her a helmet and a trailer. Then I'll be able to make bicycling a part of my daily ritual again. My intended stomping grounds have coverage by only two repeaters, one in Las Cruces, NM and one in Alamogordo, NM. However, these two machines will give me enormous coverage. If I ride far enough SE, I can add El Paso to the mix. However, I don't think Diana is ready for that yet.

I still have a few articles that were submitted months ago. I will run them in future issues. They include two articles submitted by Scott Brown, N7NET and a mammoth QRP article by John Cumming, VE3JC. Although the FT-817 Review could've "waited its turn," I felt running it early would spark some hot discussions at the HamVention since Ned Mountain, WC4X is going to discuss HF Bicycle Mobile operation. I'm sure the "Dayton or Bust: Bicycle Mobile from Ontario to Ohio" guys will have something to say about HF Bicycle Mobile, too.

Info Regarding the Internet (by KE4WMF)

eGroups has merged with Yahoo in a plot for Yahoo to rule the world. ;-) Therefore, the discussion list has a new address: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BMHA> or e-mail BMHA-subscribe@yahoogroups.com to subscribe. The discussion list has an area where members can upload files and share links to each other's websites so others may learn about the equipment and ideas of fellow BMHA'rs. It got off to a very slow start. However, it's been on fire with excellent discussions lately. The hottest recent topics have been speaker/ microphone setups and the Yaesu FT-817, featured on page 3. Several other subjects in the form of Q&As have been addressed there as well. Come on in and enjoy the fun!



More Info For the Internet-Challenged Regarding the Annual Dayton Hamvention Ride TO GET TO THE TIPP CITY PARK FROM HARA ARENA:

Under normal Hamvention conditions, it takes about 25 minutes for the drive.

First, go east to I-75. If you're in front of Hara, you'll notice that Wolf Rd. dead ends into Shiloh Springs Rd. (the main road that Hara is on) at the traffic light right in front. Take Wolf Rd. south about a quarter-mile to the first

intersection. This is Turner Rd. Turn left (you can only turn left), and stay on this road until you get to I-75 (about three miles).

NOTE: Turner Rd. changes into Shoup Mill Rd. when you cross Main St. It then becomes Needmore Rd. when you cross the Stillwater River. HOWEVER, all of these roads together are known as (and usually marked) Wright Bros. Pkwy.

When you get to I-75 and Needmore go NORTH (left, across the bridge).

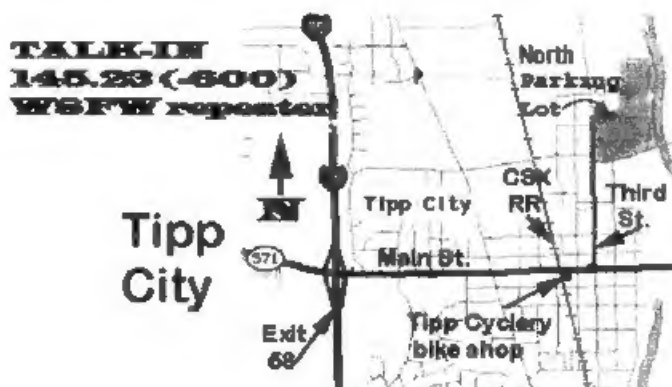
Look for the Tipp City exit (EXIT 68) in about 10 miles. Turn right (east) at the top of the ramp. This is Main St. in Tipp City.

Take Main St. into "downtown" (about a mile). You will cross a railroad track (Tipp Cyclery is on the right as you cross if you need anything for your bike).

Turn left (north) at the second traffic light past the railroad. This is THIRD ST.

Look for the park on the right after four or five blocks. You'll see a civil-war era cannon on the left, in front of the American Legion. The north parking lot entrance is about a block further north. We'll be around the parking lot someplace.

Talk-in is on 145.23 (-) W8FW repeater.



Hara Arena Area



WEBMASTER'S CORNER

In the last newsletter, I talked about New Year's resolutions. I'm pleased to let you know that I've followed through on at least one. The BMHA roster is now searchable online, so it is easy to find members in your state. Try it out at <http://www.LaFetra.com/BMHA/Content/membership.asp> -- Let us know what you think. What other features would you like to see in the online roster?

Since I have the club's Email address (people write to BMHA-Webmaster@LaFetra.com), I'll sometimes use this space to talk about what people write. This cycle, the mail has had two themes -- address changes (and new-member confirmations) and requests for advice on mounting radios on bicycles.

Membership applications are sent to the club's mailing address (see application elsewhere in this issue). From there, our trusty Treasurer makes the right ledger entries and sends the new information to me for addition to the roster on the website. If I receive an address update, I'll make changes to the roster and pass it on to the Treasurer. I don't handle membership applications or renewals myself. Because we're a volunteer organization, this sometime takes time for the loop to be completed.

At this writing (early April), my E-mail has a lot of requests for how to mount radios on bicycles -- and the BMHA Yahoo! Groups at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BMHA> has provided a lot of answers. If you think your setup has promise, you may wish to make a posting there. If you would like to see my own bicycle-mobile rig, it is at <http://www.LaFetra.com/Skip/AA6WK/Articles/CQ-VHF/April-1998.htm>.

Until next issue, keep on pedaling!

Skip La Fetra, AA6WK - BMHA-Webmaster@LaFetra.com

Membership Application

BICYCLE MOBILE HAMS OF AMERICA

Date _____

c/o Mike Nickolaus, NF0N

316 E. 32nd St. - 1

South Sioux City, NE 68776-3512

Individual \$10 _____

New member? _____

Renewal? _____

(US or Canada)

Family \$15 _____

Foreign \$15 _____

Donation \$ _____

(limit: two persons)

Make check payable to BMHA, in US dollars or international money order.

Name _____ Call _____

Address _____ License Class _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail address _____ @ _____

Age _____ Most miles bicycled in one day _____

Would you like the BMHA Newsletter in paper copy via snail mail _____

OR via the internet as an e-mail attachment _____ (please check only one)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Logging Question

I have been wondering...how do you make entries into a log book while riding?

Marty N9SE

I use a Radio Shack 90 minute voice recorder.

Bonnie KQ6XA

(Me, too! Ed)

Speaker/Mic Questions

I'd like to know what kind of mic everyone is using. For example do you use a hand mic and just pick it up when you want to talk? Do you use a boom mic mounted on or near the handlebar with a ptt switch somewhere? Also, how is the receive audio delivered to your ear? Speaker, headphone, ead-bud, etc...

Marty N9SE

Two companies have come out with a really slick setup for bicycle cops to use with two-way radios. Savox has a bone-conduction microphone/speaker that mounts inside the helmet, with an external PTT. Telex has a helmet-mounted microphone speaker combo called "Stinger", with remotable PTT. The Telex is completely waterproof and the Savox is water resistant. They both are using the new standard 1/4 inch break-away connectors like you see on fire and hazmat setups. I saw both of these at the International Wireless Communications Expo yesterday in Las Vegas.

Bonnie, KQ6XA

(Two good feature Qs & As by the same people... Ed)

BMHA's Official Logo

The next time you need to order new QSL cards, don't forget to include the BMHA logo in your design. Here's the official logo, as designed by Russ Dwarshuis, KB8U; and restored by the BMHA Editor.



BMHA NEWSLETTER

Bicycle Mobile Hams of America
c/o Mike Nickolaus, NF0N
316 E. 32nd St.
South Sioux City, NE 68776-3512

First Class Mail

COMMENTS and LETTERS

From the BMHA Discussion List...

More on the Yaesu FT-817

Just talked to Daniel, F5BBD, in northern France, about 5km from the Belgium border on 28.502 MHz USB at 12:03pm Milwaukee time. I was using my new FT-817 with internal rechargeable AA batteries (output about 2.5 watts!) and my shortened/retuned 2 ft. \$9.95 Radio Shack CB antenna sticking out the back of it. I was just standing there behind the building where I work holding the thing like an HT. I can tell you now that it's going to be a great summer bicycle mobiling.... :-)

Elroy WB9GIE/qrp/Bicycle mobile

(This is one of a FEW posts made by Elroy regarding the FT-817 and it's versatility on the Discussion List. Definitely a satisfied customer! Ed.)

HFpack Photo of the Week: Mohan

VE7FM rides into the HFpack Hall of Fame on his recumbent bike /HPM (*Human-Powered Mobile, ed*). Mohan is well known for his "Bike In Motion" DX contacts with

other HFpackers. He currently holds the HFpack Hall of Fame distance record for Human Powered Mobile. Look for him on the HFpack frequencies, as he frequently bikes around Vancouver Island on all modes... CW-SSB-SSTV-ATV-DATA — HFpack Photo of the Week:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/hfpack>

Interested in being the next HFpack Photo of the Week? Post a photo of yourself with your gear on HFpack!

Bonnie KQ6XA
HFpack moderator

KQ6XA de KE4WMF

I just noticed I may have published technical advice from a non-member. I failed to find Bonnie KQ6XA in my copy of the BMHA member list. Is she a new member? She's been a fantastic source of info on the BMHA Discussion List. I will continue to use any beneficial information from the list in this Newsletter, even if it's from a non-member. Still, she has a lot to offer us. Would someone who knows her like to invite her to the club? Her first Newsletter is on us! :-)

Scott Farrell, KE4WMF
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